remarkable monument in its pristine form and arrangement. I would call to your mind the numberless reliquaries of silver gilt which remain to us of the mediæval times, like that for instance of St. Albin at Cologne, or the gorgeous one at Aix la Chapelle, their sides divided into spaces by columns and arches, surmounted by gable-ended roofs, formed into panels with sculptures, and brilliant with jewels. These reliquaries are but imitations of the larger shrines of the Roman Catholic calendar. I conceive, therefore, that this of the Confessor, with its spiral columns restored at each angle, its mosaics complete, its niches filled with its precious relics, its gable-ends flanked with pinnacles, and the sloping roof enriched with panels, its altar in front, and its mosaic floor, must have presented an imposing spectacle sufficient to awaken and exalt the fervour of the pious pilgrim.

The floor of the chapel consists of a tesselated mosaic of interlacing circles, of meagre general effect from the insignificance of the parts, which are not arranged in grand divisions; the individual patterns, however, are graceful and full of fancy: and you may form some idea of it from the half-sized illustration on the wall.

But my subject irresistibly leads me *not* to conclude these descriptions, without calling your attention to the magnificent mosaic on the west side of the altar-screen, of the class that Mr. Digby Wyatt calls opus Alexandrinum. It is as fine as any example existing in Italy. It was originally 25 feet square, but a modern arrangement of the steps in front of the communion table, has reduced the margin on the east side. It is traced, but on a very minute scale, in Neale's plan to Brayley's work. The arrangement of the tesseræ is precisely like that of the example from the choir of St. Marco at Rome, and something in the style of the mosaic in S:. Lorenzo fesori le Mura. From the recorded inscription, part of which still remains in brass letters, it appears to have been laid down in 1268, at the time of Henry III. The larger tesseræ consist of porphyry, lapis lazuli, serpentine, jasper, alabaster, and white marble. The inscription, consisting of ten lines, occupied the bands round the circles and inclosing the great square. If this pavement were but slightly restored and polished, it would be one of the finest specimens of this class in Europe.

A serious question, from the consideration of which we must not shrink, next arises. Can these masterly relics of ancient art be restored without compromising their authenticity, without permitting the fancy to supersede sober judgment, and thus preserve them as unquestionable and unimpeachable memorials of our art history in England, and of the epochs they now illustrate? Let me ask what is necessary to accomplish this, beyond a doubt, beyond a surmise of corruption? A thorough knowledge of the different phases which mediæval art assumed not only in this, but in other countries during five centuries; a scrupulous and submissive respect for the taste, the skill, and genius of the men of that period, and for the art, which they enriched by their talents; an absence of self love. If such be the qualification, I boldly declare my conviction, that in no period of this country, not even in the ages just quoted, existed there men more competent, more faithful, more zealous to accomplish this great work. In the middle ages the artists disregarded the tastes of preceding periods, and ingrafted on an incomplete work the style of their own epoch. But now the very essence of our school is synchronism, and an almost slavish adherence, as it were, to precedent—a laborious search for examples and authority;—not a monument unvisited—not a book unread—not a MS. unexamined,—that contains aught to illustrate and explain the arts of those times.

We have architects, too, whose own works may side by side contest the palm with the buildings of the olden style. And this work might be entered upon with the more confidence under the sound judgment and discretion of the actual professional adviser of the Dean and Chapter, for his taste and skill are proved in the numberless churches which he has erected; his knowledge in gothic art cannot be excelled; his feeling for it is most intense.

I seek to avert a vast, a lamentable, a dishonouring destruction, ere it be irrevocable; a calamity, the possibility of which I feel none here present can contemplate unmoved. I ask for no rash nor extravagant re-construction, but merely a replacing of what is evidently known as having once been there—a repetition of what in other parts of the same monument may already have survived the wantonness of wilful dilapidation, or the waste arising from neglect.* And never were coincidences more favourable—never was the work more called for, which it has been, perhaps, reserved for the honour of the present times to realise. What would more excite the loyal feelings of the numerous visitors to the Abbey, than to see the tombs of England's glorious monarchs treated with respect by those in power, and restored to comparative completeness. And what a moral and historical lesson to teach them, how much we owe of the reputation of the English name in mediæval times to their heroism, and much of our present liberties and greatness to their wisdom. The visitors also would see the progressive history of mediæval art during three centuries, and learn to appreciate the beauties of each successive development. Is it wise in our Government to let the people see the tombs of our most glurious kings dishonoured, and that a feeling of loyalty and affection to past dynasties is of no consequence? Is there not something august and venerable in the kingly state, and shall we allow the record of a dead monarch to be despised and neglected? Is it wise at such moments as these, when all that can possibly be done should be accomplished, to gather round the throne and its antecedents the sympathies and affections of the people, to allow the dust of the dead kings to be as of no value? Let us hope, then, that the Government will awaken to its duties. It is the common custom of the land that a family is answerable for the maintenance of the tomb of a deceased relative. Is there no tie of affection and reverence between the crown of to-day and of past times? The Abbey authorities have of late years done much; but they have not the means to effect all that is required: and there is, besides, no pretence to call upon them to restore the tombs deposited within these sacred walls. Their funds are little adequate to uphold the fabric. And the endowments, granted by royal munificence, have been since confiscated. Let us hope, then, that the high-minded advisers of the sovereign will appreciate this duty, and show their loyalty to the throne, and prestige of the Crown of England, by causing the restoration of these dilapidated memorials of ancient sovereignty. Then, to use the Prophet's words, "*these dead bones shall speak*," not of neglect, destruction, and contempt as now, but of glories achieved. They shall *speak* of virtues long since. They shall *speak* of goodness, which we may even now imitate; and by comparison they shall teach us by their mute eloquence to value the virtues, the noble mindedness, the patriotism, and wisdom of Her who now rules over a mighty and a happy people, loving the present, yet anxious also to honour the past!

T. L. Donaldson.

* A thorough investigation of these precious memorials might bring to light treasures of art, of which we may not have any conception; and of which we may form some idea from the success which attended the slightest cleansing by the intelligent Hollis on a portion only of the tomb of Richard the Second.

The Theatre Royal Drury Lane.—For the new *Ballet Fantastique*, called "The Star of the Rhine," in which Madlle. Plunkett displays some charming dancing; there is a pretty scene of country on the borders of the swift river. In some cases, Mr. Bunn has scarcely done so much for his pieces in the way of scenery as is desirable. His company is very strong, and he has trusted to that; completeness, however, is much looked for in these days, and we hope he will not lose sight of this in the forthcoming opera by Balfe, which is now announced.

THE NEW UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS.

It is so far back as the year 1837, that the Grecian government had decreed the establishment of an university in the ancient capital of learning and refinement. But there was no building extant where such an establishment, shaped after those of Germany, could have been conveniently placed. It was M. Rhally who conceived the plan of appealing to the sympathies of the whole of Europe for this great undertaking. Konduriottis and Kolokotroni were amongst the first members of the committee named for that purpose. Some of the Greeks at home and abroad subscribed each 20,000 to 25,000, nay 30,000 drachms towards the building of the new university. As soon as an adequate amount was in hand, M. Christian Hansen, a Danish architect, was applied to. He had come in 1830 to Athens to study the Parthenon; but the works of Phidias and the sky of Greece had kept him nine years in this interesting spot. It was in 1839 that M. Hansen began the building and successfully conducted it to its termination.

The situation of the Athens University is unrivalled. Even our best educational buildings in the north of Europe are, if not crammed up between, at least surrounded by, other houses, keeping out every lofty and elevating view. If, on the contrary, we ascend the marble steps of the Athens University, we perceive on all sides remains of sublime character: straight before us the Parthenon and the Acropolis; aside the Acropolis, the Areopagus and the rock of the Pnyx, where Demosthenes delivered his speeches. Towards the south-west, rises over the glittering sea the island of Ægina; in the west, Salamis. Thus, here, the present and the past will be equally instructive and elating. The style of architecture to be chosen in this locality could not be doubtful—the more so, as even the same material was to be used, which served for the erection of former buildings, more than 2,000 years ago. A large vestibule under the façade of the building seemed indispensable, for affording the students some relief under the sultry climate. But as the front is turned south, and shone upon the whole day by the sun, a wall was to be partly run up, ornamented by pillars. Another particular feature of the edifice is, that the lecture-rooms and staircases are lighted from above, and the aula is surrounded by galleries for the accommodation of visitors on festival occasions. The walls are built of marble from the Hymettos, and the arches of doors and windows of substantial brickwork, the walls covered with stucco resembling marble. The porticus, with its columns, fronton, and stairs, is of white Pentelic marble, as well as all capitals and architraves. The chief cornice consists of bluish, polished Hymettos marble, and the halls and passages are paved with white and black marble from Tinos. The columns of the staircases and the aula are monolithes of white marble of Tinos. All outer ornaments have been painted in the way of antique buildings, with exception of the Ionic capitals, which are sculptured; and the capitals of the columns of the porticus are scantily gilt. The roof, when completed, will consist of tiles of antique shape and construction.

Mediæval Museum for Study.—At a meeting, on 23rd inst. of the committee of gentlemen who have interested themselves in the promotion of art-workshops, present—Messrs. Scott, Clutton, Pearson, Hardwick, Penrose, Clarke, Gibson, &c. it was resolved that means be at once taken for the establishment of a museum of casts from architectural ornaments and other works useful to artisans employed in architecture. An extensive list of annual subscribers, and of donors, whether in money or in specimens to the museum, is desirable, and is, if possible, to be realised; and when the museum is established, Mr. C. B. Allen is to be appointed curator, with the free use of the museum for the purposes of his proposed art workshops, during the pleasure of the committee. Mr. Penrose has consented to act as hon. secretary to the museum.

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